



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Rachael A. Zubal-Ruggieri

Rachael A. Zubal-Ruggieri is the Administrative Assistant of the Office of Interdisciplinary Programs and Outreach at the Burton Blatt Institute.

Ms. Zubal-Ruggieri has dedicated her career to improving the lives of people with disabilities, including broad-based support to multiple disability rights initiatives on campus, in the Central New York area, and nationally. Her involvement includes many grant-funded projects, opportunities, and long-term relationships with community agencies and programs.

The mother of an autistic teenage son, Ms. Zubal-Ruggieri writes and presents about neurodiversity and autism parenting, where she seeks to debunk and disrupt traditional representations of “the autism mom.”

For over 30 years, Ms. Zubal-Ruggieri worked at the Center on Human Policy at Syracuse University. She is a founding member of the University’s undergraduate disability rights organization, the Disability Student Union (DSU). Her current activities include her roles as Co-Advisor of the Self-Advocacy Network (formerly Self-Advocates of CNY), and as a board member of Disabled in Action of Greater Syracuse, Inc.

Ms. Zubal-Ruggieri is co-creator of “Crippling,” the Comic-Con, first-of-its-kind interdisciplinary and international symposium on disability and popular culture. At conferences and as a guest lecturer, she has presented on the X-Men comic books, popular culture, and disability rights and identities. Currently, she is involved in an ongoing writing project entitled, “The Micro Mutant Postcard Project.” Through this project, she uses specific conventions to bring forth creativity, melding poetry, confessions, memoir, and imagery with pop culture – especially comic books – and emergent, intersectional identities. She has published some of these postcards as flash memoirs and poetry in *Wordgathering: A Journal of Disability Poetry, Literature, and Flash Poetry* in Stone of Madness Press. Earlier this year, she was appointed Assistant Editor for *Wordgathering*.

She is a recent graduate of the Human Development & Family Science program at Falk College, with a Disability Studies Minor, at Syracuse University (SU). Her research interests include Creative Design Thinking, Technical Documentation and Usability, Technology and Disability, Parent and Family Involvement in Education, and Disability Studies.

Ms. Zubal-Ruggieri has been a Central New York resident for the majority of her life and has lived in North Syracuse for the last 16 years.

***Rachael A. Zubal-Ruggieri was selected as a
2022 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Rachel May***

